

Geraldine's Treachery

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GERALDINE'S TREACHERY

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

By

MAUDE E. SIMMONS



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STAGE SETTING

ACT I

LAW OFFICE OF BERT HAMILTON.

- 1 desk.
- 1 desk chair.
- 6 client chairs.
- 1 floor mat.
- 1 waste basket.
- 1 wall hook.
- 1 old fashioned leather couch.
- 1 door.
- 2 windows.
- 1 book case with books.
- 1 telephone.

ACT II

HOME OF HARRY DEAN.

Tenement flat of 2 rooms.

Kitchen, main room.

- 1 cupboard.
- 1 old style commode where confession is hidden.
- 1 large round table with cloth cover (large)
where Geraldine is hidden after murder.
- 1 baby cradle.
- 1 stove.
- 3 plain chairs.
- 1 rocker.
- 1 long hall that can be seen from audience.
- 1 door leading from hall into kitchen.
- 1 window looking from hall into kitchen.
- 1 door from kitchen to bed room.

- 1 large bed.
- 1 plain dresser.
- 1 small stand with clock.
- 1 door leading into hall from bedroom.

ACT III

HOME OF GERALDINE CARR. An elaborate parlor scene, with blue and gold furnishings.

An Oriental cozy corner, hung with gold and silver drops, where Geraldine hides Harry Dean so he can see his wife pass in inner room in company with Bert Hamilton.

1 large door opening in back parlor where old-fashioned fire-place can be seen by audience.

ACT IV

Setting same as Act 2.

ACT V, SCENE I

HOME OF HARRY DEAN.

Lapse of ten years.

1 elaborate furnished library.

ACT V, SCENE II

Street scene. Winter setting and snow.

ACT V, SCENE III

Same as scene I.

GERALDINE'S TREACHERY

In five Acts and three Scenes.

Time Present.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Bert Hamilton.....A young attorney in love with
Geraldine Carr.

Harry Dean.....A young clerk in the employ of
Geraldine's father.

Grace Dean..... Harry's wife, at one time Ger-
aldine's friend.

Gladys Dean..... Daughter of Harry and Grace.

Geraldine Carr.... Daughter of a wealthy banker,
in love with Harry Dean.

James..... Man servant.

Jane..... Maid servant.

Act I Bert Hamilton's office.

Act II Harry Dean's home.

Act III Home of Geraldine Carr.

Act IV Harry Dean's home, where the murder is
committed.

Act V First Scene—Harry Dean's home after a
lapse of ten years.

Second Scene—Street scene, ground cov-
ered with snow.

Third Scene—Harry Dean's home.

ACT I

BERT HAMILTON'S OFFICE

BERT HAMILTON—(Enters office, hangs up hat and coat, speaks while toying with letters on desk.) I must and shall have an answer from that woman today. My patience is about exhausted. Why was I so unlucky as to fall in love with Geraldine Carr? She still cares for this man Dean, and must have some object in asking me to wait six months. She is as deep as the sea and yet I love her. She has nothing to gain, absolutely nothing. Three months ago no man was climbing the ladder of fame faster than I, and now I cannot get my senses together long enough at a time to do one good day's work. My love for this woman will be my ruin. God, I feel like murdering this man Dean with his handsome boyish face. Bah! he is a puppet. Think what Geraldine's money and her father's influence would do for me, but without her they would be as nothing. Why can she not listen to reason and become my wife at once? I would take a month's vacation out in a quiet village, where the noise and rattle of the city are not known, and what a heaven on earth it would be! Bah! I am day-dreaming. I must try and work today. There is the McClellan case, that must be seen to today; also the Jones case needs attention. I cannot put them off any longer. I must get my senses together long enough to accomplish something. Some one is

coming down the hall. Another client I suppose, but I hope they will pass by, for I am in no mood to talk business with anyone today.

GERALDINE—(Enters.) Good morning, Bert. My, what a frightful mood you must be in. Business rushing?

BERT—Yes, rushing by the door. Excuse me, Geraldine, everything is in disorder, but this is an unexpected pleasure I assure you. It is an old saying that "great minds run in the same direction." I was just thinking of you.

GERALDINE—Bert, I don't believe you are a bit pleased to see me, and your face does not speak of pleasure. Your thoughts could not have been pleasant ones.

BERT—Excuse me, Geraldine, but I owe you an apology for not offering you a chair; the old office chairs are not much to offer though the best I can afford.

GERALDINE—O, they will do; really, Bert, you have a very lax office boy. I notice the dusting has not been done. You are too easy.

BERT—Never mind, Geraldine, darling. You say my face wears an unpleasant expression. You perhaps know the reason why. O, come darling! Why not tell me your object in waiting so long. See, my business is dropping off. I cannot work, nor am I the same man. If you would but explain, Geraldine; please tell me your reason for waiting.

GERALDINE—Bert, have a little patience! Why can you not be reasonable? You have not known me a year yet. I came this morning to tell you a story. No doubt you have heard part of it—not a pleasant one I assure you. Bert, dear, I want you to help me. I can trust you and you are the only one who can help me. So small a favor I ask, then your answer comes: it will please you. Say you will do anything under the heavens for me, Bert. Ah, I knew you would.

BERT—Go on, Geraldine. I knew you had an object for coming. I will do anything and everything that lies in my power. Geraldine, darling, you will not keep me waiting three long, weary months, but continue your story.

GERALDINE—Are we alone, Bert? Listen, then, I will tell you my story. First you have heard that my father is the richest man in New York. I am his only child, having never been denied one wish. Ah, Bert, I can hardly tell you.

BERT—Don't try, Geraldine. It does not interest me. No doubt I know too much now, and don't care to hear of your love for another man, but you have strayed away from the subject. I am anxious to grant your favor and receive your answer.

GERALDINE—Have you the patience to hear a woman's lovesick story and then give her your help? About two years ago a young clerk came to work in my father's office, by name Harry Dean. He was poor but, O, so handsome. I shall never forget the first time I saw him. Ah, Bert, the feeling is

still there. I drove by in my car to call for father, and Harry Dean came out to tell me that father was busy. O, God, if I could but forget! I looked in his face and only heard a part of what he said. It was that father would not keep me waiting long. He returned to the office and I waited just an hour. Yes, Bert, I was dreaming. The time did not seem five minutes. I could see that bright handsome face, those great blue eyes and refined features. I woke up to realize that this boy had stolen my heart. Then father came. As we drove home I asked of this boy. Father said he was poor but ambitious—had come to him highly recommended. Wait, Bert, you must listen. I will make the story short. I had father ask him to dine with us the next evening and I dare not think how it ended.

BERT—Geraldine, why do you tell me all this? I love you so it is not pleasant to me. Will you not forget this man and become my wife? You know I have social and political prestige, and in a few years will be placed where I can give you every pleasure the world affords, and I swear to make you happy. This man Dean never loved you, my darling. Look, my business is going to hell. I cannot work, you are on my mind each hour in the day. Your face appears on all my papers. Come, give way and become my wife.

GERALDINE—O stop, Bert. I must and shall tell you all, so you will understand why I seek your help. My love for this man has made me a fiend. Once I had as true and tender a heart as ever God gave woman but now I spend hours dreaming of

nothing but revenge. You will help me, Bert. I will continue the story. Harry Dean came to dine with us and came every evening for about five months. Every time he came and went my love grew stronger. There was not a cloud in the sky. One bright beautiful morning I arose early and while out on the terrace I received a letter. I can remember how pleased I was. It was from my dear girl friend whom I had not seen since we parted at school—bright, laughing Grace Elliott. She was coming to visit me. How could I wait for the evening to come and with it Harry! I was so anxious to tell him the grand good news, and that evening when I told him there came a smile to his face and he said in a joshing way: "I might fall in love with her." I laughed too. Impossible! I was so sure he loved me and meant to ask me to become his wife. But at last the day arrived for her coming, and two girls were never more pleased to embrace each other. I thought I would not tell her of my love, but keep it as a surprise, and when Harry came that evening I introduced them. Think, Bert, I stood by and saw his blue eyes grow brighter and larger, and from that hour on he never was the same. Ha! ha! It was love at first sight, and wherever Grace was he followed like a little puppy dog; you could find him at her heels. Yes, she stole him from me, and I never will be content until I make her suffer as I have done. But not him, no, not him. I would not harm one hair in his head. It is her I hate, and O, so bitter!

BERT—Calm yourself, Geraldine! Why tell any more? No good can come of my knowing it, and re-

venge will help none. You seem to forget the favor I am to grant. Can you not come to the point at once?

GERALDINE—You say give up. No, never! See my plans fall to naught? Bert, you shall help me. You will understand there is not much more to tell. She, this friend of mine, had just visited me one month. I dare not think of it. They planned to meet early one morning and remained away all day. When they returned, and he presented her as his wife, I nearly lost my reason; but an inner voice whispered to me—be silent; your time will come. And from that hour, night and day, I have planned and schemed. Now the time I have waited and longed for is here. They have been married just one year and ten months. I have kept trace of them and find they have one child—a little girl. They are very poor and she, his darling, becomes more dissatisfied every day. I shall call on her today, but not as her friend—God, no! only to work her ruin and downfall, as she heedlessly worked mine. O, Bert, what a pleasure it will be to see her head bowed in shame? Ah, I can hardly wait.

BERT—Geraldine, why excite yourself! I see now the favor that is expected of me. I am to help work this woman's ruin. I do not like the idea. I ask you now to stop where you are.

GERALDINE—Bert, you must not and shall not fail me! My one thought is to make a beggar of this woman who stole my love. Listen, dear, your part is not much and it means so much to me. You are to be at my house this evening at nine. I will

plan to have her there and without her husband. I will call there this morning and take her by surprise. Of course I will make a great fuss over her and pity her very much. Offer my friendship and she will be easily handled. As I am leaving, just as an afterthought, I will invite her to this party I have planned. Of course he will not attend, but she will. You shall meet her there, seemingly fall in love with her, flatter her—all women like flattery. You will be her escort to the party, with the understanding that I am to be with her but in the next carriage; then I shall remain at home. I shall have work to do. Your part in our little drama is not hard; then I can prove that she attended the party without me and with you, her lover, as an escort. You shall be innocent—you thought her single.

BERT—Geraldine, I do not quite understand. What can you gain? If you love this man yet, how can you love me and become my wife? What good will it do you to break up this home and ruin this woman's life? And that is your object if I guess right. It is bad business.

GERALDINE—What can I gain? Revenge! Ah, how sweet the word sounds. I have waited two long years, and now you would be soft-hearted, but I suppose I can get some one else that will help me for the same reward that I offer you. There is one other I know of who will gladly help me. But really, Bert, listen; I was beginning to think a great deal of you, and it hurts me to see you take the part of a coward. Of course you can suit yourself.

BERT—You tempt me sorely, Geraldine. You offer the greatest prize a man can be offered. But continue, I have not heard all your plans. Yes, my darling, I will help you. When do we start?

GERALDINE—(*Aside.* I thought so, poor fool.) Today, Bert, at once; it cannot be too soon. I have waited so long. Ah, Bert, she is a simple little fool, and will be so easily handled. You must be on guard and not allow her to see your love for me. You are to pose as a very rich man, and in love with her at first sight. If she finds you care for me that would be ruinous to our plans. Remember the hour is nine. I will have everything arranged. I was just thinking how handsome you are growing of late Bert. I shall be real proud of you as my husband.

BERT—Do you really mean it, my darling? But, Geraldine, a man's wife and home is all that he has that amounts to a great deal to him, and I confess I don't like to take part in the breaking up of this little home that may mean so much to this man. We are all human at times, and that old rule that we were taught in our childhood days: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." God, what I would not do to the wretch that would break up my home or cause your ruin, my darling!

GERALDINE—(*Aside.* Poor fool, he will never have the home to break up when I get through with him.) Well, I might have expected this. Your nerve is failing you. Bert, dear, it is hard, but I must say good bye, and I don't like to think I may

never see you again, as I had already planned our happy future. (*Aside.* Will the fool never come to my terms?)

BERT—If you but mean what you say, my darling, you must not talk of leaving me. Geraldine, the love of a woman will compel a man to do most anything—to sink as low as a dog. Sometimes a man will even become a thief just for the love of a woman; but if that woman be a good pure woman, in the sight of God, that man may soar to the highest goal in life, but we men are as clay in the hands of the moulders. We can be moulded into various shapes and forms all through the one little thing—love—and what we won't do when love compels, God only knows. How I love you, Geraldine, and to prove this love I will take the downward step, but God forbid that I may ever go far enough to have too large a stain against me that it cannot be wiped out on that day of judgment. But what am I to do with this woman after the party?

GERALDINE—Just leave that to me, Bert. Why, really, I admire you. I did not know you were such a sincere man, but I am really proud of you.

BERT—We have to be sincere at times to gain our point in life.

GERALDINE—Your word that you will never reveal my plans or break faith with me. You know money does a great many things. You would much sooner have my love than hate. Come, swear to me!

BERT—If you keep your word to me, Geraldine, there will be no cause for me to break faith with you; but God forgive me for my part in this day's work.

GERALDINE—(*Aside.* Why, how theatrical Bert is becoming!) But really, Bert, God will have nothing to do with this day's work, and I am anxious to begin. After you have taken her to the party, return her to me. I shall manage the rest. My friends are ready to attend this party on ten minutes' notice, whenever I think the night is fit. You take the rest of today for laying your plans and so arrange your business that it can be left for a while and when I have finished with her, my friend, I will join you. You will be there, don't fail!

BERT—You may depend upon me. I will not fail you; but, darling, you will not keep me waiting long when you have separated them? When your revenge is completed, then you will come to me, my darling?

GERALDINE—Yes, Bert, the time will not be long. I must say good bye. Nine P. M. sharp, this evening. Don't let it slip your mind, dear.

BERT—Good morning, Geraldine. I will be there.

GERALDINE—Good morning, Bert; don't keep me waiting.

GERALDINE (*Aside, as she exits.*) Yes, fool come and do my dirty work. Why, really, he is easier handled than she; but if I can get Harry he will look as nothing to me.

BERT—(*left alone.*) Will she be true to her word? She must. No, I will not fail her; but this is bad business. Who would think that a minister's son, brought up and taught to walk that right and narrow path, would for the love of a woman, forget that kind old father's teaching! How many, many times have I heard my father say, whom God has joined together let no man put asunder. No, no, Geraldine, I cannot, cannot do it. Come back, you must release me. (*Goes to door and opens it.*) No, she is out of hearing. God, how can I do it? Too late now, I cannot be released. I must live up to my promise, though it be the ruination of my soul. Soul! has a dog like me a soul? Bah! too late to talk about my soul. I have cast the die, but deep in my heart I pity this little family which I am to help set apart. And the child—what in the name of heavens will become of it? I dare not stop and think. (*Looks at watch.*) Ten-thirty, I must go to court and arrange my business for an immediate departure.

(CURTAIN.)

ACT II

HOME OF HARRY DEAN

Opens with Dean's wife on the stage.

GRACE—O, how I hate to be the errand boy, the servant, anything and everything! If I have to continue to live this life much longer I shall surely lose my reason. At first it was not so bad, when we had the dear little cottage, but now it has come to two rooms. My father had more in his wash house at home than we have here. I might have expected this. Married a poor man for love! O, dear, love is all right as long as poverty is not a part of it. If I had only learned to work; but work—I never thought I would have to work brought up as I was, and to think what I have brought myself to. I hate to admit that I become more hateful and dissatisfied every day. I shall not work today; no, I will take this one day off and read. This new book has such a grand title, "Rosaline's Lover." I shall have six hours to read until Harry comes. Strange how I can forget all this misery by reading. Poor Harry, I do love him. He was so sure my father would come to our assistance. Mean old bear. I knew better. I, his only child! What pleasure can he have in knowing how I am situated and not even come to my assistance? Now, just hark, I do believe that is baby. She does not sleep ten minutes at a

time. O, what a cute wee baby you is. Mama's little lamb. I do love baby. If it were not for her I would leave at once and go back to my old home. Yes, I just hate it all. O, no, no, I do not mean it. How wicked of me! Leave Harry, so good and kind. Why, he is the most patient husband woman ever had. I just wish I was half as good and patient, but I am afraid I will never be. No, baby, your Mama has no patience, but for heaven's sakes close your eyes and I will sing a lullaby and dream of the dear old home! How I wish we could all live there—you and I and papa. Now, I am sure that was some one at the door. I do hope it is not Geraldine. Her note said she would call soon, but she is so proud and scornful I hate to have her see my poverty. (Grace opens the door.) Ah, Geraldine, I never expected to see you again. It has been such a long time, but come in. I do not like you to see my poverty.

GERALDINE—(enters.) O, never mind your poverty, my dear. Are you not glad to see me? I see, you are day-dreaming again. The same old tricks, Grace, that will make you old and wrinkled.

GRACE—Yes, Geraldine I know, but tell me have you seen or heard of my father of late? Harry is not at home, but sit down and stay a while.

GERALDINE—(dusts chair.) I am just as well pleased. Harry does not care for my company, and but for you Grace, I should not have come. I have so much to say to you, my dear, but surely Grace, this is a joke—come down to living in two rooms. (Laughs.) Surely Harry can do better than this.

Why, let me look at you, dear. Yes, I believe you look ten years older and no wonder. Why really Grace I feel as though I was in a small band box. How do you ever endure it?

GRACE—Geraldine, do not dare laugh at me. You know I would have it different but Harry is out of luck and can do no better. Geraldine, you really do not mean I am getting to look so old? I do worry some, but Harry is so good and kind I do not like to complain.

GERALDINE—Why worry, Grace? You chose your lot, now stick by it. Grace, you stole your husband from a girl whom I know. She would have made him rich and her god, but why tell you now. You poor abused darling. I did not mean to laugh at you or hurt your feelings. Poor little friend of the olden days. I have thought of you so many times, and now when I find you situated like this it really breaks my heart. I have been thinking of our happy school days so often of late, and I said this morning I must go and offer my help and friendship. You know Grace I was real spunky to think you did not let me be your bridesmaid. Why really, Grace, there is a wrinkle on your forehead, and if you don't soon have a change from this you will have a score of them. Come, darling, you need cheering and a good true friend and—what is this Grace? O, the dear little lamb! Why, see Grace, it knows I am its mama's friend. See, she smiles at me and she looks just like her pretty mama, Grace. She has not one look of Harry, and how I shall love her. Her name Grace?

GRACE—Baby's name is Gladys Geraldine.

GERALDINE—(on the side. How dared she give that brat my name? Me love her offspring? No, I just wish I dared murder her, but I must calm myself.) Grace, dear, how long has it been since you have been anywhere? A long time, I am sure. I have a pleasant surprise for you. I came to invite you and Harry to attend the moonlight party I am giving. It is something entirely new and will be grand. Don't say one word until you have heard me out. If Harry should refuse to attend, which he might, if I try real hard I might plan a way for you to go, and what a lovely time you shall have my dear. Now, don't say that you will not come.

GRACE—Geraldine, why do you come here and tempt me? You know that Harry will not hear to it, and should my father hear that I were to be one of the party he would be there, and I cannot give him the satisfaction of seeing me appear in the same wardrobe he bought me and I have had nothing new in the past year. You need not look so surprised, Geraldine.

GERALDINE—Why should I not be surprised? Think of it, Grace! But you shall have something, and if Harry will not listen to reason don't allow him to spoil your pleasures. Remember, Grace, you are not a child. Your father will not attend. He has not been well of late. Dear little friend, I am so anxious to do something for you. I have a pleasant surprise for you. You shall have a beautiful new gown for this party. Now, come, don't be proud,

as poverty and pride do not go together. Say you will accept and use your woman's right and go. Your answer, Grace?

GRACE—Geraldine, it would be delightful and you are so kind to offer me the gown, but really I hate to tell you my husband becomes more fond of me every day. I cannot leave his sight one hour of the day. What excuse could I offer? He will not take me I am sure, and I confess I should like one evening's pleasure.

GERALDINE—(On the side. Little fool, I shall punish her for telling me of this love for her. How can he be fond of her babyish face? I would not have believed they would live together this long, but if my scheme works, revenge, sweet revenge. Now, for the policy role.) You shall have one night's pleasure, dear, yes, you shall have a dozen nights' pleasure. Ah, such pleasure as you least expect. But, Grace, I don't believe you are as fond of me as in the old days. It hurts me, for I think so much of you. I have really been unhappy since we have been separated, and I would like to make life more pleasant for you. Listen, Grace. Do you know I have just the right plan, and if you can play your part, I will manage mine well. Harry will never find out. I shall send a message, saying I am quite ill and you know Harry is so goody-good he will not refuse to let you come and hold my poor aching head. Trust the rest to me, dear. Ah, trust me to the end. Now, I had almost forgot to mention my friend, Mr. Bert Hamilton, I want you to meet him. So handsome and rich; the very type of manhood. I know you shall like him.

GRACE—You forget Geraldine, I am married, and should care for no man but my husband, but I shall be pleased to meet him as your friend.

GERALDINE—Why, you silly child, you must not take me as I sound, but as I mean. O, see Grace, I have been here more than two hours, and must say good-bye for a short time. You will come? Say you will, dear.

GRACE—I will try Geraldine, so you may send a message, but I don't like lying to Harry. It is not quite right. You don't know how kind and good he is, but then I am getting just a little tired of this poor life and dull time and I hate living in two rooms.

GERALDINE—Who could blame you, my bright beautiful bird, but you look for the message most any time and you will not fail me. I will see you safe home again and make all excuses to Harry. Bye-bye until the party.

GRACE—Good-bye, Geraldine. I will wait and long for the time. I am so glad you came.

GERALDINE—(Going into hall.) Fool, soft head, you are as wax in my hands! Yes, I will send the message, and I will do more than that. I will prove her false, false in his eyes. Then, then I will teach her to come with her fair baby face and steal him from me just when my game was almost won.

(Geraldine exit.)

GRACE—(Alone.) Six o'clock. Harry is late. Could anything have happened to him? No, it could not be; I would hear of it. And shall I tell Harry Geraldine was here about the party? No, I am sure if I do he will not attend or want me to. Were not Geraldine's diamonds lovely? And mine are all gone. O, well, I will sit down and read. Harry will surely be here soon. Yes, Geraldine will arrange so that Harry will never find out. I can trust her. I will go. I cannot stand the temptation. Was it not kind of Geraldine to offer the gown? I just wonder if she will get a real nice one, and if it will be becoming. I would like to look just lovely before this Mr. Hamilton. Geraldine said he was rich and handsome. Ah, well, my Harry is not rich but handsome, and how happy we would be if he were only rich. Yes, I am tired of it all. There is nothing here but poverty. How surprised Geraldine looked when I told her I had nothing new in a year. I suppose it will be many years if I remain here, and I shall never learn to work. How mean of my father. He could just as well help us, but I shall never ask it of him. Now I come to think, Geraldine did not tell me the date of this party. I wish it were tonight. Hark, that is Harry's footstep in the hall now. Yes, I am sure, and I have no dinner ready.

(Husband enters.)

HARRY—Good evening, my dear little wife. How are you and baby this evening? I am just a little late. Can my doll forgive me? I had some very important business and have been planning for better times. My darling has been dreaming

and has not dinner ready but I shall sit down and read the paper. It will not take you long. Now, how is Papa's baby this evening? Well, and bright. I tell you, Grace, darling, the one thing that we have to be thankful for is good health.

GRACE—I know, Harry, but I am getting so tired of having nothing and doing the work myself. Health is a very nice thing, but I do wish we had money. I was not dreaming. I have had company. You cannot guess who has been here.

HARRY—No, my darling, it surely was not your father.

GRACE—No, Harry, you are wrong. My father will never come. It was Geraldine. Just think, after so long a time. She wants to be kind to us and has offered to help us. Is that not kind of her? But, Harry, she is not well at all. Since she has gone I have been thinking of her, my father and the old life. That is why dinner is not ready, and—listen Harry, Geraldine may send for me to sit with her at any time. She does not go out often. She says she is sad and lonely.

HARRY—Grace, I do not like to deny you a friend, but I would much rather Geraldine would stay away. I am sure her sudden appearance means no good. Her visits and her fine airs will make my darling more dissatisfied. Why, Grace, let me look at you. Yes, Grace, you are blushing, and what a strange look there is in your bright beautiful face. Surely my darling is well. I see you are worried. Never mind dinner, come and sit here. I have some

news for my little wife. I am sure it will please her. Listen, Grace, we are to have better times. before long. You remember a month ago I spoke of a Mr. Gerome. He is superintendent of the big iron works. I am to meet this man this evening. He is trying to place me in a better position. I did not intend to tell you until tomorrow, but my darling looks so sad this evening I cannot keep the grand, good news. Now, cheer up, little wife. We shall have the cottage back and your servant. Now, don't that sound fine? But see, Grace, it is eight P. M. I must leave you for a short time, but you will have something to dream about. Don't pout little girl, but kiss me and wish me good luck.

GRACE—O, Harry, I am so afraid, but I do hope you will not fail.

Good-bye, dear.

(Husband exit.)

GRACE—Dear me, why will my face give me away? Harry knew I was lying to him. I shan't go if Geraldine does send the message. I will be patient, for I have a dear good husband. (Goes to glass.) But Geraldine is right. My beauty is fading fast, and I will never have anything living with Harry. The cottage and servant. Ha, ha! I will be the servant, and I just hate to work. I do hope Mr. Gerome will do something for Harry, for my patience is about exhausted. Come baby, Mama will rock you a while and read. Some one coming down the hall? Perhaps Harry has forgotten something. No, it is not he, or he would come in.

(Opening door.) Come in, please. Yes, I am Mrs. Dean.

MESSENGER BOY—(Enters.)—I have a message for Mrs. Harry Dean.

GRACE—Well, I am Mrs. Harry Dean. You will wait; there may be an answer. (Reads message.) "Dear Grace: I am so lonesome and not near so well this evening. Can you please come and sit with me? Tell your husband he can spare you one evening. Your true and loving friend, Geraldine." You may go, there is no answer. (Messenger exit.)

GRACE—(Alone.) How strange she did not tell me it was so soon! Shall I go? Yes, I cannot refuse. It means such a good time and a new gown. Harry will never find out. Geraldine is so clever and will see to that. I shall just write Harry a note, call Mrs. Harris to look in at baby, put on my wraps and go. (Writes note.) "Dear Harry: Geraldine is very ill and has sent for me to sit with her. Don't be angry and don't worry. I have asked Mrs. Harris to look in at baby. I shall not stay over night. Your loving wife, Grace." There it is done. Now I will pin the note on baby. He will see it there sooner than any other place. (Opens hall door.) Mrs. Harris, will you look in at baby? She is asleep and I have to go out for a few minutes. Thank you, ever so much. Now I wonder if Geraldine could have gotten my gown so soon? I suppose she had already gotten it as a surprise. I do wish Harry could see me, but I must hurry or he may return and not allow me to go.

(Kisses baby.) Dear little baby; don't waken until your Papa returns. Good-bye two little rooms, Life is so dull here. I am going for one night's pleasure. (Grace exits.)

MRS. HARRIS—(Enters.) Now and begorra isn't she terrible? Sure one night's pleasure. That's all the young wives think of these days. Now would you believe I have been dying to enter these rooms and look around ever since that stuck-up thing moved in. Its no wonder you read of a divorce case every day in the week. The poor man—sure he's a nice lad. Tips his hat to me when he meets me in the hall. I suppose he's working over-time while his wife's out having pleasure. Sure things is different when she comes in the hall. It's good morning and never looks off her book. Dime novels! It's little work the women of these days do. Now, if she was left with eight young ones to feed like myself, it would be washing over the tub she'd be or she'd be after sending them to the orphan's home. (Baby fusses.) There, there you poor lamb. Ah, ha! a note. Now, its no harm for me to read it. (Reads note.) Ain't she terrible? Sit with a friend. Ah, well, he might believe her. Now its sure I will sing you to sleep, poor little thing. (She sings song.) Now, there, I better be after going. I just stepped in to look after the baby. She may return and I don't want to appear nosey. (Exit Mrs. Harris.)

HARRY—(Returning.) Dear little wife. Won't she be glad when she hears the good news. \$150 per month! Think what she can have! My bright beautiful darling shall have a pretty new dress the

first month. Hello, how strange everything looks and how silent—Grace dear, have you retired? I have good news, darling. (Looks in inner room.) What, not here? Surely my senses are not leaving me. O, Grace, dear Grace, don't hide, my darling. Surely Grace could not have gone out and left the baby. No, she is just playing a little trick on me. I have stayed longer than she expected. Now, I come to think about it, how strange she looked this evening. There was something wrong and God helping me, I will find out what it is. Ah, a note pinned to baby! That will explain. I am always so hasty. Perhaps her father has sent for her. I'll bet that is it. (Reads note.) "Dear Harry: Geraldine is very ill and has sent for me to sit with her. Don't be angry and don't worry. I asked Mrs. Harris to look in at baby. I shall not stay over night. Your dear wife, Grace." O, God, can Grace be lying to me? No, she is as pure as an angel. I should as soon believe the stars would fall as that she, my wife, would lie to me. There is some one at the bottom of this. She told me Geraldine was here today. Can she be the guilty one? How could Grace listen to her and go away in my absence? No, my God no, I cannot think ill of her, my pure white love. I am sure she loves me, but she is just a little tired of the poverty. But why waste time? She would not leave baby long alone. She perhaps has gone for just an hour. I will go over for her and if I do find Geraldine up to anything, God help her. How surprised they will both be?

(Husband exits.)

(CURTAIN.)

ACT III.

GERALDINE'S HOME AND PARLOR SCENE.

GERALDINE—(On the stage.)—How I hate this girl whom I once loved. Why does she not come? I hardly can wait for the time. How much happier my life would have been had she not come between us. I am sure Harry loved me until she came to visit me. I cannot see how he would prefer her to me. Bah, she is a simple little fool, and if she had kept out of the way I should have been his wife. He would not be toiling for his daily bread. My father's money and influence could have made him a great political man—and Bert, how I hate him. The clock is striking eight and Bert should be here, and I wanted her to arrive first.

(Tap at door.)

GERALDINE—Come in.

Servant enters and bows.

GERALDINE—Well, are you dumb? What are you standing there for with your mouth shut?

SERVANT—(Excited.)—Yes, no; a lady to see you, but she has no card. Name, Mrs. Dean.

GERALDINE—James you are nothing but a blockhead, and if I was not so in need of you you would leave here at once. Show the lady in and be quick about it. (Servant bows out.)

GERALDINE—Somehow I cannot trust that fellow. He reminds me of a snake. Luck is with me.

Servant returns and announces Mrs. Dean.

GERALDINE—Ah, Grace, dear, you have gotten away. I am so glad. James, you may go. How dare you stand there?

(Servant exit.)

GRACE—Yes, Geraldine dear, I got away just fine. Luck seemed to favor us. Do you know Geraldine, I feel nervous. Harry had to go out for an hour or so. Some business; I did not pay much attention. I sat dreaming when your message came. I was much surprised you did not tell me the party was tonight. I kept my word and I am here. I left a note for Harry. Do you think he will suspicion anything is wrong, Geraldine?

GERALDINE—Of course not, my dear. Don't think about it. Your pleasures must not be marred with one single thought of Harry or those two little poverty stricken rooms. Come see your gown. It is beautiful. You shall look like yourself once more. You may step into the other room and Jane will help you to dress. You will excuse me as I am looking for Mr. Hamilton. Hurry love, for I am dying to see you in your pretty gown.

GRACE—I shall hurry, Geraldine, and also try to please you in my looks. How dear and kind of you, but I do wish Harry could see me. (Kisses Geraldine.) Now that is your pay for my gown.

GERALDINE—Thank you, but hurry Grace. You are real late now. (Exit Grace.)

GERALDINE—Her Harry! No, he shall be mine, My Harry. My God, if that woman kisses me again I will murder her. Yes, I am good and kind. I might have been had she not crossed my path. How hot my face is, but God knows my heart has been on fire for two years past. Now, the time is here. Why is Bert late? He may have got weak-hearted. He dare not fail me. I should stop at nothing. My hand is right on the brim of revenge. If he fails me, what can I do? I shall have to say I am ill and remain at home. No, no, it must not come to that, after I have worked so hard and everything has worked to my advantage. I believe I am just a little nervous and that will never do.

(Servant announces Mr. Bert Hamilton.)

BERT—Good evening, Geraldine, am I late for the party?

GERALDINE—Bert, just take the pleasure of kicking that servant out. He is the biggest dumb-head I ever had on the force.

SERVANT—I'm moving, mam.

GERALDINE—You are not late, Bert, but I began to worry. You would not dare be one minute late. See, I have grown somewhat nervous and I have planned a thousand ways should you have failed me. Listen, my lady is here. You have not forgotten your part? Don't be hasty and remember I am to come in the next carriage.

BERT—Darling, how could I forget my part? My teacher has taught me my lesson too well. Geraldine, we are quite alone, are we not? And you love me, darling? Say once more that you do. Say that you will be my wife after this night's work is done.

GERALDINE—Bert, this is no time for love-making. Why can you not wait? Have I not promised to be your wife?

BERT—Geraldine, I ask you once more. Had we better not stop? You can gain nothing, and I feel like a damn scamp.

GERALDINE—Coward! Stop where we are? No, never. Do you hear? Don't dare mention it to me. We have just begun. If you fail me now I should lose my reason. If you love me, don't be cowardly, and do your part.

BERT—Geraldine, my love for you is my ruin. It has made me stoop so low I am ashamed of my own face in the glass. A man that will stoop so low as to break up another man's home is just what you called me, a dastardly coward. Geraldine, you will not keep me waiting long.

GERALDINE—But listen, my lady is coming. Do be careful. Don't forget to flatter her. Not too strong or you will frighten my bird away before I have had time to crush it.

(Maid announces Mrs. Dean.)

GRACE—Ah, Geraldine, I am quite rested now. I have not kept you waiting. Geraldine, I thought we were alone?

GERALDINE—Yes, my dear. How sweet and fresh you look. Come, I wish you to meet Mr. Hamilton. Bert you shall be pleased to meet Mrs. Grace Dean—Mr. Bert Hamilton.

GRACE—Mr. Hamilton, I am delighted to meet you.

BERT—Mrs. Dean, the pleasure is mutual; opportunity seldom affords a man to meet so fair a lady. Geraldine has spoken of you often. I must say my dreams have been disturbed.

GRACE—Mr. Hamilton, you offend me by talking that way. I am a married lady. I suppose you are to be one of the party this evening. My husband does not care for such amusements, but you know we the weaker sex like to be amused.

GERALDINE—Of course my dear, and don't mind Bert's compliments. His failing is flattery.

GRACE—Do we not start at once, Geraldine? I was so afraid I had kept you waiting.

GERALDINE—At once, my dear. Just allow Mr. Hamilton to assist you. I shall have Jane to help me. Come dear, the carriages have been waiting for some time.

BERT—Yes, allow me to assist you, Mrs. Dean. It will be a pleasure I assure you. My friend, Mr. Page, will attend Miss Geraldine. We are ready now and will start at once. I don't like being late. Geraldine will follow in the next carriage.

GRACE—Geraldine I would much rather you would ride in my carriage.

GERALDINE—Come, you are just nervous, my dear. I will not be ten paces back of you.

(Exit three. Geraldine returning, throws off wraps.)

GERALDINE—At last my point is gained. My, how weak I have become. I shall take just a small drink to stay my nerves. (Laughs.) Why, really, I think I am beginning to be jealous of Bert. Such attention and such flattery. I did not imagine the old boy was so clever. I guess not—me jealous of him. No, he is not my type of man. Now, if Bert only does as I have told him she will wish she had never stolen Harry from me. O, you little innocent fool. Your moonlight party will be pleasant but you will have something to worry over when you find I am not there. Go in the next carriage. She swallowed it like a fish does bait. Harry will believe her false and divorce her. I shall not have worked for nothing and my promises to Bert—O, well, I can get rid of him for about \$50.00. There are many who will be willing to take the job, and I can manage her. That will be easy. When I get through with her he will scorn her so that she will be too proud to give an explanation. Harry, Harry, how I love you! What if my father should know? But he shall not. The bell. Some one's coming. If it be Harry.

SERVANT—(Enters.) Mr. Dean is below and wishes to see you, my lady.

GERALDINE—Show him up at once, James. You do not dare keep him waiting. (Servant exit.)

On return announces Mr. Dean.

HARRY—Good evening, Miss Geraldine, (looking around.) I expected to find you quite ill and my wife holding your poor aching head. I see she is not very attentive. (Looking around again.) Come Mrs. Dean, you need not hide. I am after you.

GERALDINE—Why, Harry, you really surprise me. Did Mrs. Dean not tell you she was to attend the moonlight party this evening? She has known it for over a week.

HARRY—Miss Géraldine, for the love of God will you please explain? It may be I do not understand you. I expected to find my wife here. She left home and a note saying you were ill and had sent for her to sit with you. Here, you may read it. There must be some mistake.

GERALDINE—(Reads note and laughs.) Why now, isn't your wife a sly little vixen. No, Mr. Dean, there is no mistake. Your wife has known this for some weeks. I called on her about three weeks ago and asked her to have you bring her to this party and when she came this evening unattended and without you I was just a little surprised. She said you were not well and should not attend.

HARRY—Woman, you will please explain. My wife attend a party without me? She told me you called this afternoon for the first time. Now, you tell me you called some weeks ago. I must not understand. My wife could not lie to me.

GERALDINE—Come, Harry, you have too much confidence. Now, don't be angry with me when

I tell you that Grace has surely lied to you. Why she told me only this morning that she was tired of your humble home and I am afraid your sweet little wife has played you a trick. But, Harry, you will believe me. I wanted you to come. She did not. There was a certain Mr. Hamilton among the party who is rich and handsome. She, your wife, knew he would look after her pleasures.

HARRY—Stop, Miss Carr! Not another word. You forget yourself. You are speaking of my wife—the woman who bears my name—the mother of my child. I cannot believe you, but mind if I find she is false one lesson will be enough. Why are you not one of the party?

GERALDINE—That is easily explained. I was taken quite ill at the last moment and decided to remain at home, and when I found that you were not to be there, my pleasure was spoiled, but your dear little wife could not forgo the pleasure and remain at home. My friend, the young Mr. Hamilton, offered to attend her and she accepted the offer. O God, Harry, please do not take it so hard. Hear me! She, this woman, does not nor never did, love you. See, Harry, I would give every drop of blood in my heart for just one kind word from you.

HARRY—Wait, stop, woman. Don't forget who you are talking to. Not another word, Miss Carr. You, you have played your cards well. The love of such a woman is not fit to receive a thought. That does not excuse her. I have decided all women are false.

GERALDINE—Harry, let me just be your friend, and to prove there is one woman not false if you will but remain unseen I will prove to you what I have said. Harry we were friends once, and you were learning to love me when she, Grace, came and stole you from me. For the old love I still hold for you I will prove that friendship in time of trouble.

HARRY—My God, woman, would you have me stoop to watch my wife? Though it will be hard I cannot take your word. My eyes must see what you say, Miss Carr.

GERALDINE—Listen, Harry, they are returning. Come, please, step behind this portière, and be silent. You shall see your wife in a pretty new gown, a present from Mr. Hamilton, but remember you are not to make any scene.

(Servant announces Mr. Hamilton and Mrs. Dean.)

GRACE—Ah, Geraldine, I have had such a delightful evening. Are you feeling better now, dear?

BERT—I explained to Mrs. Dean for your absence.

GRACE—O, Geraldine, I am sorry it is over. Tomorrow I shall have to live the old life again. It will be much harder to bear.

GERALDINE—Mr. Hamilton, you will please take Mrs. Dean down to the dining room. Lunch is served there. Excuse me. I never partake of lunch so late. My head is not quite well.

GRACE—O, Mr. Hamilton, I am nearly famished.

(Exit both. Geraldine pulls curtain aside.)

GERALDINE—Now, Harry, is that not quite enough? See, she has no thought of you. Now, I want to be your friend. Did she not look handsome in the new gown? Mr. Hamilton has very good taste.

HARRY—Stop, don't say any more, Geraldine. You might go too far. I have seen and know all I care to, and will say good evening to you, Miss Carr. All women are alike and I would rather be without a friend. Such women as you do not know what pure love means, and may God forgive her and you too if you are the cause of this night's work.

(Harry exit.)

GERALDINE—(Alone.) Have I worked and sinned for naught? No, he is a fool and will come to me yet. That was surely proving her false. There was disappointment and hatred in his face, and how I hate her. He will leave her now, and if I could but manage to see him again. Yes, I must try but I have her to deal with first. My message I sent her. I must find out if she has destroyed it. There must be no proof against me. The game has gone too far. (Rings for maid.) Jane, you go down and ask Mrs. Dean to come to me.

(Exit Maid.)

GERALDINE—(Alone.) O, God, now for my revenge. Now, Grace Elliott, I will see you a ragged

beggar on the streets and the love you stole from me must and shall be mine.

(Mrs. Dean announced.)

GERALDINE—So, Grace, you have had a delightful evening?

GRACE—Ah, Geraldine, you have no idea of the pleasure this opportunity has afforded me. I have been just a little worried and have imagined all sorts of things. Why are you looking so cross, dear?

GERALDINE—Do I look cross? You forget my headaches. But, Grace, I was wondering what you did with the message. It was such a silly little note. I hope you destroyed it. I should not care to have it read by any one except yourself.

GRACE—I put it on the blaze, Geraldine, and dreamed of the beautiful time I should have as it crisped slowly, slowly up the chimney. But, Geraldine, if you should have asked me to remain home with you I should have done so.

GERALDINE—You have had something to worry over, Mrs. Dean. Your husband has been here.

GRACE—My husband!

GERALDINE—Yes, your husband. I could not tell you how angry he is. I should not wonder that he passed you as you came through the hall. He would not listen to any excuses. Your behavior, Mrs. Dean, does not look well in the eyes of your loving husband.

GRACE—Why, how are you talking, Geraldine? When did I cease to be Grace and become Mrs. Dean to you? Ah, Geraldine, my best and dearest friend, you surely tried to explain. Yes, I am sure you did.

GERALDINE—And I am sure I did nothing of the kind, and Mrs. Dean it is impossible for me to count you among my friends. Any woman that will leave her husband at home and attend a party in the company of another man is not my style of woman. I cannot tell how surprised I was that you did not return at once when Mr. Hamilton received word that I had to remain at home. What will people say? You know the world must talk. Mrs. Dean attended a party this evening without her husband and in company of the rich Mr. Hamilton. How does it sound, Mrs. Dean?

GRACE—O, Geraldine, you cannot mean what you are saying! People dare not talk, for I have done nothing wrong. He is your friend and I understood you were to follow on in the next carriage. He, Mr. Hamilton, did not tell me he had received any word from you. Believe me, Geraldine, dear, and help me. If you turn against me Harry will not believe the story I have to tell him. Mr. Hamilton assured me that everything would be all right.

GERALDINE—You are very clever, but really I am tired of your stage acting, Mrs. Dean, and would ask you to leave my presence. You can return to your loving, doting husband and see if he will believe the story his innocent, pleading little wife puts up to him.

GRACE—Geraldine, you are trying to fool me. If you mean what you say, think Geraldine, what it means to me? Come, you are going home with me. Harry will listen to you. Say you will go. You must not forsake me now. Remember your promise.

GERALDINE—Good evening, Mrs. Dean. I do not care to witness the rehearsal of your high-class comedy. You can tell your husband your own story. Furthermore, it is not my line of business to patch up family rows.

GRACE—(Becoming angry.) No, Geraldine Carr, friend, betrayer, you perhaps cannot patch up family rows, but I shall prove myself pure and spotless in my husband's eyes. I shall betray the trick you have played me, false, treacherous friend.

GERALDINE—You are a very clever actress, Grace. I shall call James to show you out. (Touches bell, James appears.) James, you will show Mrs. Dean the way out. Good evening, Mrs. Dean.

GRACE—(at door.) Geraldine Carr, I will pray to God to put a curse on you for this night's work. (Exit Grace.)

GERALDINE—(Alone.) Now, I am sure I am well pleased with this night's work, and as long as God has nothing to do with my life He will not interfere. I have gotten rid of her. It was easier than I thought. Harry, Harry, how I have sinned for the love of you! If he should take her back I

would plan to murder her. She cannot have gone far. I must make one more effort. I will order my car and reach there first. He must listen to me. (Touches bell, James appears.) James, order my car at once. Be quick and don't stand staring at me.

SERVANT—Yes, mam. (Exit.)

GERALDINE—I shall make a race for life. It means life and love to me. (Geraldine exit.)

(Man servant on stage, arranging table.)

SERVANT—This sure has been a busy night and there's the bell again. I will have no rest tonight. Miss Geraldine is on a rampage. (Answers bell.) Right this way, Mr. Hamilton. Miss Geraldine is not at home. Just left three minutes.

BERT—Can you tell me where Miss Geraldine has gone, James?

JAMES—No, sir.

BERT—Come, James, I think this little piece of paper will bring the answer. Out with it, you sly old dog.

JAMES—Seeing that it's you, Mr. Bert, I did overhear her say it was Mrs. Dean's she was going to.

BERT—Thanks, James, I will call a cab at once. It is late. I have business of importance and must see Miss Geraldine tonight. (Exit Bert.)

SERVANT—(Alone.) Well, well, this is strange business, but sure my lucky night. Now, if I only

had a gal that liked me that well she would not have to run after me. There is Miss Geraldine running after Mr. Dean and Mr. Bert after Miss Geraldine, but I pity the poor little wife, for Miss Geraldine has no mercy and she's up to something.

(CURTAIN.)

ACT IV

HOME OF HARRY DEAN

(Harry returning, sits at table.)

HARRY—My home is wrecked. My wife is false. Grace, Grace, how could you? And only this evening I told her of the struggle I was making for better times. This is Geraldine's work, but if Grace had loved me she would not have gone. I wonder who this Mr. Hamilton is? He'd better keep clear of my path. Some tool of Miss Carr's. If he loves that woman I pity him. Let her be my friend? No, she has broken up my home and ruined the dearest thing I had on earth. But I must not stay here as Grace will be returning and I never want to look in her false face again. I shall take the child and go West. I can be no worse off there than I am here. Many a good man has made his fortune. I will try my luck. (Picks up picture of Grace.) Once loved wife. Shall I take it? No, she did not love me and if I had that to look at, I would hate her more, but I had better take it for the child. I will have to tell her of the mother who forsook us for a richer man. In years to come she will want to know of her mother, then I shall have the picture to show her. (Picks up child.) Come, poor, little motherless baby. We shall go far away. You are too young and innocent to know of your Papa's sorrows. I shall take nothing, but begin life anew.

(Geraldine enters. Bert Hamilton appears at window in hall.)

GERALDINE—O, Harry, I have come once more to offer to be your friend. Harry, let me take the child and care for her? I shall teach her to love me and perhaps it may draw you to me in years to come. If necessary I could wait for many years, if in the end you should learn to care for me.

HARRY—Woman, you are insane. Leave my innocent little child in your care? No, I would rather see her in her little coffin and in the guarding care of her Almighty Maker than to trust her future to such as you.

GERALDINE—You surely do not intend to leave her future to the care of her Mother. No, leave her to me, Harry. I shall raise her in that right and narrow path which we are all taught to walk. See, Harry, have I not been your friend? It was not my fault that Grace was false to you, and as to Mr. Hamilton, I thought well of him until tonight. Harry, he, this flirt, has asked me to become his wife, but I could not marry a man that would stoop so low as to part man and wife, as he has done this night. I hate him, and every time I should look in his face I should think of this little home he has destroyed. Say you will let me have the child! I promise I will live for her and her only.

HARRY—You have made a very clever plea, Miss Carr, but I understand you and I pity this tool of yours. You will please step aside and allow me to pass. I cannot breathe the same air as you. Per-

haps it will be a pleasure to you to remain here and view the wreck you have made of this home. (Harry exit with child.)

(Bert enters unknown to Geraldine.) (Geraldine goes to window.)

GERALDINE—Harry, Harry, come back to me! I love none but you, dear. I cannot live without you. Ah, God, I have sinned for nothing. No, no, it cannot be. I did not think he would refuse me the child. Well, there is nothing left me but Bert. Bah, I hate him!

BERT—Have a care, woman! I have heard your confession of hate for me and also witnessed your plea for this man, Dean's love. You have played me false. Think woman, for love of you I have stooped so low I never can look a righteous and God-fearing man in the face again.

GERALDINE—(Laughing.) So you have stooped so low as to eavesdrop? Well, I might as well tell you I would not be bound to a wretch like you with the words "love, cherish and obey" for the world. Me love you? No, I hate the sight of you. I hate you so I cannot breathe the same air with you. You were a fool to think I loved you. Do you think I would have come to you and asked your help in this dirty work if I had loved you? No, I love this man Dean, and always will with my heart and soul. I would not give his little finger for your whole body. Bah, what do you know about love? You love me because I am good-looking and rich. No, don't touch me. You have gone too far for that. Man, I hate

you. Cannot you see that? Have you been blind? No, I would see you a dog in the gutter without a friend and if you were to ask alms of me, I should turn you as I am turning you now. I should glory to see you burned in the live coals of hell first. That is how I hate you!

BERT—Fiend! You are a she-devil. You say you will see me a dog in the gutter and my body burned in the coals of hell, but for this night's work your life shall pay the forfeit. (Draws knife.)

GERALDINE—No, no, Bert, don't dare. For God's sake listen to me. I will take back what I said and become your wife if you will but spare my life, which is so dear to me. Listen, Bert, I am too young to die. I will go far away with you and be a good true, loving wife. Please spare my life. Hear me, dear, I do love you. I was only trying your love for me. Wait, let me put my arms about your neck dear and listen.

BERT—Ah, fiend, no! you shall never fool me again. This is my chance.

GERALDINE—Hear me, darling, I only wanted to get the child and wreck its life the same as we have wrecked hers. Bert, you shall have my money, my love and I will be true to you. Please spare me.

BERT—You shall never live to wreck the child's life. No, woman, your life shall be my reward for this night's work. (Strikes with knife and kills her. Light is overturned in scuffle. Moon shines in on ghastly scene.)

BERT—My God, was the reward worth having? I have killed the only thing dear to me on earth. Hark, what noise was that? Some one is coming. I must conceal my crime. (Drags Geraldine under table. Draws cloth down. Bert exits and appears at window.)

GRACE—(Enters, lights lamp.) O, how strange everything looks. Harry, Harry, I say where are you dear? I have come home to explain. Not gone, and baby, too? O, God, where could he have gone? (Falls on knees.) Harry, my husband come back to me. I did not mean to do wrong or to lie to you. Listen Harry, she came and tempted me. Come Harry and take me with you and baby. Dear God, hear me and bring him back. I did love Harry and what shall I do? Where shall I go to find him? I am sure he would listen to his Grace. Harry, how could you take my little baby from her mother? You shall not take my darling to this Geraldine. No, my Harry could not love her. Go to my Father? No, he would laugh at me. He shall not know. Geraldine, you have played your cards well and I have no home, no husband, no baby. Mr. Hamilton, why did I think of him? I should die first and to her false friend? No, never. I cannot stay here. I would have nothing to pay the rent with. I shall have to leave the little home and go out in the big world, and only this evening Harry told me of the plans he had made, but a serpent has crept into this little home and made a wreck of it. Teach music? Yes, I could do that. Will any one take me without reference? I can give none. From tonight Grace Elliott or Grace Dean is dead, and, Miss Geraldine, I know your object now,

but your plans shall be as naught. For the last time I will say that my Harry would not have her. Good-bye, little home, you shall shelter me no more. (Exit Grace.)

BERT—(Re-enters.) My God, what a scene to witness, and to know I am the cause of it. What will become of that poor little woman in this big city. (Throws cover off table back and exposes Geraldine cold and dead in all her splendor. Alone with his dead.) Hear me, Geraldine, you have gained your point, but at what a price. Darling, you drove me to despair with your taunting words. No, no, I cannot go out in the world and be a fugitive from justice. The justice was mine and mine alone. Geraldine, my darling, come back, come back to the one who loved you most. Look at this poor little desolate home. You and I are the cause of it. How can I stand it, and this woman that was my highest ideal of womanhood, dead and murdered by my hand. (Kneels down.) Ah, Geraldine, Geraldine, my beloved, come back, come back. Cold, cold in death. I never can recall her. No, she has gone beyond my recall. She is with her God. He will deal with her better than mortals can, because he is the Almighty Judge. O, God, judge me as I am a sinner. You say that your sins can be as scarlet but can be washed as white as snow. I have sinned, my God. O, how I have sinned for love of this woman, and I pray you my Almighty that my sins may be washed pure. My earthly Father that was; but is in Heaven now, intercede, intercede for me now. I cannot face my Almighty Father, criminal that I am. (Gets up and sees empty baby crib.) Poor little innocent

baby. Your mother shall be righted some day for she is as innocent as you and I will be the one to right her. I shall leave a confession. See, Geraldine, you shall not have the pleasure. I will right her and then— (Takes piece of paper out of pocket and writes.) “I, Bert Hamilton, am about to leave this world after murdering Geraldine Carr, the woman I loved and who led me into crime for her falseness to me after I helped break up Harry Dean’s home. I swear by my God that Grace Dean was as innocent and pure as an angel, and did no wrong, and whoever finds this confession will right a great wrong if that person will find and give it to Harry Dean, and I swear by my God that I have written nothing but the truth. Bert Hamilton.” I shall hide it for the time being. The scandal will be great enough but some one will find it in months to come and clear her. (Hides paper in old commode drawer under the paper. Turns to Geraldine.) There, you devil, our crime shall be known. Ah, Geraldine, I cannot call you that in death and I cannot live without you, so will join you in death where we both can be judged of our sin by the same judge. (Stabs himself.)

(CURTAIN.)

ACT V.

SCENE I.—HARRY DEAN'S HOME AFTER A LAPSE
OF TEN YEARS.

Harry's little daughter sitting on stage.

SERVANT—(Enters.) Miss Gladys, your Papa sent this home with orders to put it in the library.

GLADYS—(Laughing.) What a queer looking old thing. It must be a hundred years old, but sit it here James until he comes.

SERVANT—Yes, Miss Gladys, thanking you Miss Gladys for not ordering it taken up to the garret. (Servant exit.)

Gladys sits down by piece of furniture and opens drawers—Now, what on earth can Papa want of this musty old thing. For my part I do not care for such relics.

HARRY—(Enters.) Good evening, Gladys, I see you are busy.

GLADYS—Good evening, Papa dear. I have been waiting a long time for you.

HARRY—Well, Gladys, you are eleven years old today, and see what Papa has brought his pet. (Holds up diamond necklace.)

GLADYS—(Toying with dress does not see it.) Why, Papa, what can I want of such an ill-looking old thing as that?

HARRY—But Gladys, you are looking at the wrong thing. (Clasps necklace around her neck.)

GLADYS—(Running to the glass.) O, thank you, Papa. Is it not beautiful? No little girl ever had such a dear good Papa. How bright it shines. But, Papa, why did you buy this old article and what good is it? (They both sit down near old commode.)

HARRY—Now, you see my dear, it is utterly no good, but it has a story. Long years ago I knew a young couple that were very poor. They lived in an old tenement house. They had just two rooms. This was one piece of their furniture and many times the young husband went to that old commode for a pinafore for their little baby, while his wife sat laughing at the little kicking heels. Today I was in that quarter of the city and saw this out in front of a second-hand dealer's for sale. I dropped in, bought it and sent it home. While talking to the old Jew I learned that the poor old woman that kept this tenement house died two months ago and the furniture was sold to gather money together to get her a resting place.

GLADYS—(Opening drawers, finds paper.) See, Papa, this old paper is yellow with age, but there is writing on it. I can make out the name Bert Hamilton.

HARRY—For God's sake, Gladys, give it to me. I have the right to read it. (Reads confession.) "I, Bert Hamilton, am about to leave this world after murdering Geraldine Carr, the woman I loved and who led me into crime, for her falseness to me after

I helped break up Harry Dean's home, but I swear by my God that Grace Dean was as innocent and pure as an angel and did no wrong. Whoever finds this confession will right a great wrong if that person will find and give this to Harry Dean. I swear by the Almighty God I have written nothing but the truth. Bert Hamilton."

HARRY—O, God, I have wronged her! But the evidence and the gown she wore.

GLADYS—O, Papa dear, what is it? A letter from the dead? Your face is so ghastly, Papa, and you have read aloud your own name.

HARRY—Gladys, I have a story to tell you. This old piece of paper belongs to me but it has come too late. She, your Mother, may be dead.

GLADYS—Papa, dear, I have wanted to ask you so many times of my Mama. Today little Bessie Taylor called on me and she asked me about my Mama. Is she dead, Papa?

HARRY—Gladys I had expected this some time, but it is a subject hard for me to talk on.

GLADYS—Then don't talk, Papa. I did not mean to bring sad feelings. You must not feel sad. I shall ask again.

HARRY—Gladys you may as well hear the story now. The way I had thought it was for years, until this old paper was found this evening. Come, my darling, and sit on Papa's knee. Long years ago Gladys your Papa was very poor. That sounds

strange, does it not dear? And your mother was the fairest creature on God's green earth. She was a rich man's daughter and brought up in luxury. By the time she was seventeen years old her father had planned to marry her off for money. He was a greedy old miser. Then she came on a visit to her friend, Miss Carr. I was also Miss Carr's friend and held a high position in her father's office. For some time I had spent the greater part of my evenings at the Carr home. I liked Miss Carr but she loved me. Your Mama came, and I knew the moment I met her that I loved her. She had come on this visit to get out of marrying this man, her father's choice, and when I asked her to become my wife she was more than willing. I told her I was poor, and could not afford the luxury that she was used to, but that I should work hard and do the best I could for her. We were married just one month from the time we met. When her father heard of it he sent word to her never to darken his door again, but that made no difference. We were happy and could do without him, and this Miss Carr she said nothing just then but did her work later. She had learned to love me madly. I did not think of that. I made a cozy little home for my darling. We spent one year of perfect happiness, then God sent you my darling, to bless our home. Another year of happiness passed; then the serpent had waited as long as she could. She began her work by causing me to lose my position. I did not lose heart and tried to cheer your Mama, but the time came when we had to leave the little cottage and move into two rooms. Your Mama began to worry and pine. My child, I cannot tell the rest. It opens the old wound.

GLADYS—Then, my dear Papa, don't tell the rest, but I think I know now why you bought the old commode. It belonged to you and Mama. You were the young couple in the story?

HARRY—Yes, my dear, but I will finish. Miss Carr came one bright day and planned little by little to wreck my home. She caused your Mama to lie to me, and to become dissatisfied. I returned home one evening to find no dinner ready and your Mama dreaming. I asked her in a laughing way if she had done nothing but dream all day. She told me no, that our friend, Geraldine, had been there for the first time that day and that Miss Carr was not very well and might send for my darling to sit with her at any time. Miss Carr had planned a party; also an escort for your Mama. She sent a message while I was out and my darling left. Afterwards she told me that this Mr. Hamilton made your Mama a present of a beautiful new gown. I saw her in his presence and in this new gown. Miss Carr heard them returning, and she had me wait and I saw her smiling bright face in this man's company. I returned home, took you, all I had left, and went West. I have not heard of your Mama since. Do you think you understand the story Gladys?

GLADYS—Yes, I think I do, but perhaps you were too hasty, Papa. She might have explained. The piece of paper says she did nothing wrong.

HARRY—I thought there was nothing to explain. I thought she lied to me, went knowingly and wore this gown—a present from another man. She appeared vain and false.

GLADYS—But, Papa, who told you this man gave her the gown? Did she herself?

HARRY—(Starts.) No, it was Miss Carr told me.

GLADYS—But, Papa, this Miss Carr may have told you a falsehood. You say she loved you. I am not very old, and do not quite understand, but there is something about the story that leads me to think she, my Mama, was not to blame and was terrible wronged.

HARRY—Many years have passed, and it is too late now. If I have wronged her may God forgive me. We have forgotten, my darling. It is your birthday. Run get your wraps on. We must not forget. We are off to the opera. Call Jane, my dear, to help you, as it is late. (Gladys rings bell.)

HARRY—(To maid servant.) Jane, take Miss Gladys, brush her hair and help her on with her wraps.

SERVANT—Yes, sir.

(Exit both.)

HARRY—(Alone.) Is the child right? Was I too hasty? Could she have explained? I know Miss Carr was a designing woman, but why did not my Grace tell me of her former visits? Why did not she ask me to take her to this party? She just lied to me and went, that was all.

GLADYS—(Returning.) I am ready, Papa. Shall we start at once?

HARRY—Yes, dear, we will be late now.

(Exit both.)

SCENE II.

STREET SCENE—GRACE AS BEGGAR—CROUCHES
BY DOOR.

GRACE—Please, Mister, help a poor woman. Every one passes without a cent. Not one cent to-day. What am I going to do? Snowing and no place to go. Put out once again and only a cellar to sleep in. Ah, God, only for my two little rooms, my good kind husband and baby. Think, I was dissatisfied. I have tried hard to work, been governess and gave music lessons but no one will keep me long without references. My father turned his back on me in the hour of my need, but I must have help.

(Husband and child pass.)

GLADYS—O, look, Papa, at the poor beggar lady. Can we not help her? See how poor and frail she is, Papa.

(Husband and wife look at each other.)

GRACE—O, Harry, my husband, don't you know me? It is Grace, your wife. For God's sake don't turn away.

HARRY—No, woman, nor do I want to know you.

GLADYS—Papa, can the poor lady be my Mama? Please, Papa, do listen. Remember what the paper said.

GRACE—Harry, let me but touch my little child. See, I cannot soil her. My hands are clean, and Harry if you would but listen I could explain everything.

HARRY—It is too late to explain. (Gives her alms.) Woman, let us pass. Come Gladys.

GLADYS—Please, Papa, do listen. You are such a good kind Papa. The paper said she was innocent and did nothing wrong, and Papa I would love to have a Mama like other little girls.

GRACE—Harry, listen. I was tricked and betrayed by a false friend. She sent a message saying she was ill. I went. She tempted me to go to this party and remained at home herself to blacken my character in your eyes.

HARRY—Stop, woman, don't add lies to your shame. You knew of this party and you wore a gown, a present from this man Hamilton.

GRACE—Harry, it is a lie, all lies, believe me dear, she, that fiend, gave me the gown and I knew nothing of the party until she called that morning. Just take me home and I will clear everything. I will not care how poor we are if only I can have you and my baby.

GLADYS—But, Mama, I am a big girl. You have no baby now.

GRACE—Yes, dear, think Harry, I have walked the streets night after night hoping against hope that I might meet you and see my little child.

GLADYS—Papa, you have a kind good heart. Forgive Mama and let's take her home.

HARRY—Gladys you may bring your Mama home with you. I shall try and forget.

GLADYS—Come Mama, I will take you home.

(STREET CURTAIN UP.)

SCENE III.

HARRY DEAN'S HOME.

GLADYS—This is our home, Mama.

GRACE—Harry, it cannot be. This place is not our home.

HARRY—Yes, this, this is Gladys and my home.

GRACE—Harry, you do not mean that I am to stay here? Me, the beggar, that has known no place but the streets or a cellar for ten years past.

HARRY—For God's sake, don't say that, Grace. I don't want to think of how you must have suffered, but you shall have the home that you wished for years ago and more than one servant. But, Grace, I will ask you, did you hear of the sad ending of our enemy?

GRACE—Yes, Harry, months later I picked up an old paper and there read she met her death in the little home she had destroyed, but then in our happiness she is forgiven the deep wrong she did me.

GLADYS—Yes, Mama, but you must kiss me and then Papa, for you are welcome home. (Grace kisses child, then husband.)

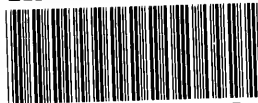
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